



July 18, 2016

Ref: 167782

Mr. William Holmes
Mr. George Mackie
Ms. Ying Zhou
UBC Neighbourhoods Taxation Working Group
4 – 5650 Hampton Place
Vancouver, BC V6T 2G5

Dear Messrs. Holmes, Mackie, and Ms. Zhou:

Thank you for your letter of June 5, 2016 to me and your May 23, 2016 letter to my colleague, the Honourable Michael de Jong, Minister of Finance, regarding the decision to recover fire service costs from neighbourhood areas in the University of British Columbia (UBC). As the Minister responsible for funding fire services at UBC, I am pleased to reply on behalf of the Province of British Columbia.

The Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development is working with UBC to ensure that quality fire services for residents of on-campus market housing continues under a plan that is fair to all British Columbia taxpayers. Fire service is essential to community safety everywhere in the province – and the principle that residents pay their fair share for local fire services applies to all communities in the province.

In British Columbia, where unincorporated areas receive community fire services, property owners fund those service costs through charges that are additional to the general rural area property tax rate. UBC's neighbourhood residents have been in the unique position of receiving fire services, but, unlike the province's other unincorporated areas, residents have not been charged separate costs for this service. The new funding structure for UBC's neighbourhood residents will now be consistent with the model used in the province's other unincorporated communities. Due to lease agreements between residents and UBC, this change will not increase the total property tax rate (a combination of UBC's services levy and provincial rural taxes) paid by neighbourhood residents.

I have considered your request to apply a portion of the general rural area property tax to fund fire service costs for neighbourhood areas. From a fairness aspect and to maintain consistency with the Province's tax policy, it would be inequitable to recover separate costs for fire services from residents in British Columbia's unincorporated areas (including the University Endowment Lands), but not from UBC's neighbourhood areas. While I regret the Ministry is not able to support your request, I do hope that you understand the reasoning.

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Ministry of Community,
Sport and Cultural Development and
Minister Responsible for TransLink

Office of the Minister

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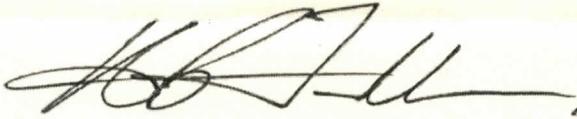
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I understand that you have had discussions on this issue with the Ministry's Senior Policy Analyst on this file, Mr. Chris Jensen. If you would like to discuss this matter further, I would encourage you to contact Mr. Jensen, who would be pleased to speak with you on this matter. He can be reached by telephone at: 250 356-8737, or by email at: Chris.Jensen@gov.bc.ca.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Fassbender', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Fassbender
Minister

pc: The Honourable Michael de Jong, Minister of Finance
Mr. Richard Alexander, Chair and President, University Neighbourhoods Association
Mr. Michael White, Associate Vice President, Campus and Community
Planning, University of British Columbia
Mr. Chris Jensen, Senior Policy Analyst, Minister of Community, Sport and
Cultural Development